



Community Safety Hub opens

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For a safe, clean, and inclusive Prince George

Like every community, Prince George is managing complex social issues associated with two concurrent health emergencies: the ongoing opioid overdose crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The response has involved multiple government ministries, Northern Health, the RCMP, the business sector, and numerous community-based organizations all working to improve the health and safety of the unsheltered homeless while addressing related community impacts.

To address persistent and multi-faceted social issues like homelessness, substance use, and mental illness, responding agencies must connect and communicate to ensure their activities are coordinated. With this goal in mind, the City of Prince George, in collaboration with its partners, has launched the Community Safety Hub to enhance and support multi-jurisdictional service coordination.

The Community Safety Hub, which opened on April 6 on 2nd Avenue and George Street, serves as a critical connection point for many of the core agencies across governments and non-profit sectors that regularly contend with some of society's most complex issues. While the uses for the Hub are still evolving, the location provides flexible work and meeting space for City Bylaw Services, Northern Health, BC Housing, RCMP including the Downtown Safety Unit, the Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Downtown Prince George, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and more.

Notably, the Hub is not a "public facing" office and members of the public should contact participating agencies directly through their established communication channels (e.g. dialing 9-1-1 during an emergency or 3-1-1 to reach the City's Service Centre) to report a problem or request further information.

The establishment of the Hub was one of the key commitments approved by Council that are contained in a **report** from the Select Committee on a Safe, Clean, and Inclusive Community.

“Council would like to thank all of our partner agencies for continuing to work with the City of Prince George to improve health, safety, and well-being for all of our residents, particularly downtown where the Hub is located,” says Lyn Hall, Mayor of Prince George and Chair of the Committee. “These agencies have committed significant resources to the Community Safety Hub which reflects the priority they place on service coordination and communication. Council also thanks the Committee membership for their important contribution to the well-being of our residents.”

The Community Safety Hub complements existing downtown service enhancements funded by the City of Prince George including enhanced RCMP patrols, dedicated Bylaw Officers working in the downtown from 7 am – 11 pm 7 days per week, storage service sites for the homeless, and bio-hazard clean-up. Service coordination enabled by the presence of the Community Safety Hub will also create readiness for the opening of the 1st Avenue Health and Housing site.

Participating Organizations:

BC Housing

BC Housing develops, manages and administers a wide range of subsidized housing options across the province. We also license residential builders, administer owner builder authorizations and carry out research and education that benefits the residential construction industry, consumers and the affordable housing sector.

“BC Housing is pleased to join the City of Prince George and other partners to launch the Community Safety Hub. This initiative will synergize the expertise of different partners to enhance services to the downtown community.”

- Malachy Tohill, Regional Director, North, BC Housing.

Downtown Prince George

Downtown Prince George is the business improvement association serving all property owners and business tenants in the C1 Downtown zone. Our mandate is to promote and advocate for a better

downtown through partnership, programs, promotions and events. Our goal is to create a positive culture of safety, vibrancy and beauty that will attract business owners and citizens to live, work and play downtown.

“Downtown Prince George has had a long-standing vision towards a multi-jurisdictional approach to managing the complex social issues in our community and in our downtown neighbourhood. We believe that this deliberate effort to build connections between business, enforcement, social service providers and the people in need, is the best way to work towards a more livable and safer downtown for everyone. We are hopeful that the collaborative model of this Community Safety Hub will lead to long-term improvement and will build a better understanding of the shared responsibility in addressing the impacts of homelessness, substance abuse and mental illness.”

- Eoin Foley, President, Downtown Prince George

Northern Health

Northern Health delivers health care across Northern British Columbia, serving about 300,000 people, many of whom are Indigenous. Through the efforts of dedicated staff and physicians, in partnership with communities and organizations, Northern Health services include acute (hospital) care, mental health and substance use programs, public health, and Home and Community Care.

“Northern Health values and is committed to the important partnerships and collaboration that it takes to address complex social issues in communities. We look forward to the Community Safety Hub serving as a crucial point of connection between these partners, and to its evolution in supporting a safe and healthy community.”

- Penny Anguish, Northern Interior Chief Operating Operator, Northern Health

Prince George Native Friendship Centre

The Prince George Native Friendship Centre is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization dedicated to servicing the needs of Aboriginal people residing in the urban area and improving the quality of life in the community as a whole. Fundamental to this is the recognizing the inherent worth of all peoples regardless of race, creed, sexual orientation, or culture and to promote this view in the community at large.

“The Prince George Native Friendship Centre is happy to be a part of this collaborative effort. We have committed to extending our hand of friendship through the creation of long term and sustainable solutions by joining our partners to address not only the needs of business, the social service sector, and the community, but also to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in our community; the unsheltered homeless population. We continue to be interested in mutual learning experiences that will mitigate some of the complex issues by fostering bridges of understanding in collaboration with our partners to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of all citizens of Prince George.”

- Barb Ward-Burkitt, Wahiyow Cawapata Scoo, M.Ed., O.B.C.
The Prince George Native Friendship Centre Executive Director

Prince George RCMP

The Prince George RCMP Detachment proudly provides policing service to the City of Prince George, British Columbia.

“The Prince George RCMP supports the Community Safety Hub and will encourage its use by the Downtown Safety Unit, Citizens on Patrol, Car 60, General Duty members, and the RCMP Restorative Justice Program as a place to exchange vital information with our partner agencies.”

- Cpl. Kurt Chapman, NCO i/c Community Policing, Prince George RCMP